



A Christmas Series – Lesson 2

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Leader Outline

Lesson: Saying Yes

Main text: Luke 1:30-38

Description: Mary said yes. What can we learn from a teenager who trusted God's plan even when it meant giving up her own? That it was the very best yes she could have possibly said. And that we can fully trust God, because His plan is far better than anything we could ever imagine.

Supplies:

- Luke 1:46-53 printed out on sheets of paper for everyone to take home
- Several different colored sheets of construction paper
- A candy bar

Game: My Plan, Your Plan

Small Group Questions:

1. How do you think Mary was feeling after the angel told her God's plan for her?
2. How would you have been feeling if you were in her shoes?
3. Do you think she made the right decision?
4. Why do you think it was so easy for her to say yes?
5. Do you want to live as a servant of the Lord? Why or why not?
6. Is it hard to commit to saying yes to God?
7. Do you really believe that God will protect you and not harm you?
8. God loves you so much that He sent Jesus to die for you, and Jesus loves you so much that He *chose* to die for you. That's a crazy kind of love! When you think about that, does it make it any easier to follow God's plans, even if they're different than your own?
9. Are you willing to give up your own plans for your life in order for God to be able to use you for His plans?
10. Do you think that being a servant of the Lord is an adventure? Why or why not?

Game

Lay out the construction paper in a big square in a random pattern, making a life size “game board.”

Split the group into two teams and give them each a pen and paper.

Place the groups on opposite sides of the board.

The objective is for them to get one person to the other team’s side of the board.

Choose a team to be team one. Tell them to decide their plan for getting the first person across, and write it down. (They will write down what colors they are going to step on, so the plan would look something like: blue, red, red, yellow, green, etc.)

At the same time, team two has to be on the defense and try to stop them from getting across. They have to guess the path team one is going to take, and write down their own plan, with the hope of landing on the same square as team one.

Have both teams give you their plans, and then read each step out loud as they take it.

If the two team members end up on the same square, it’s a point for team two. If they don’t, and the player from team one ends up on team two’s side, it’s a point for team one!

Next, team two tries to get across while team one is on defense.

The first team to five points wins!

Teach

Why was that game so hard? I mean, really, it shouldn't be that hard to keep someone from getting to your side of the board.

It was hard because you had no way of knowing what the other team's plan was.

We all have plans, right? And even if we don't have solid plans, we at least have dreams, things we want to accomplish.

Let me ask you a question. Let's say your plans were to graduate high school and go to college. You had worked hard, done everything you were supposed to do, and were on track to get an incredible job after college. You knew this was going to make you so very happy.

And then someone shows up at your house and says, "Hey! I'm here on behalf of God. You know those plans you've been working so hard on? You're going to want to go ahead and cancel those. Your life is going to be way different than you thought it would be. God's got a totally different plan for you."

How crazy and earth-shattering would that be?

Well, it's actually happened before.

Read Luke 1:28-34:

The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; His kingdom will never end." "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"
– Luke 1:28-34

Mary had plans. She was going to be marrying Joseph. They had not slept together because they were waiting for marriage. She had a plan, and she was following it.

But then, out of nowhere, an angel shows up. And what he said changed her plan in a big way.

In that time period, it was a huge no-no to get pregnant before being married. So much so that you could be shunned or even sentenced to death. So the plan that the angel gave to her had some pretty big consequences.

Okay, I need someone to help me out. The first person to make it up here gets a candy bar.

Give the first student to make it to you a candy bar.

Here you go. Don't eat that until after service is over. Now, if you just sit up here for me, I'm going to need you in just one second.

Before service, ask a student or leader to run and snatch the candy bar from the student when you give them the signal.

Let's keep reading.

Signal your helper to run and take the candy bar away from. See what the student's reaction is.

Whoa, what just happened? He took your candy bar?! What in the world—that was yours! You worked hard for that!

Okay, so that's usually how we react when something is taken from us. And when we have a plan that is taken from us, or changed, we probably react in a similar way.

Let's see what Mary did.

Read Luke 1:35-37:

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail." - Luke 1:35-37

Okay, now we're just talking crazy. She's going to have a baby simply by the Holy Spirit coming on her? And her cousin, who is too old to get pregnant, is also going to have a baby? These things were impossible.

But the Angel promised, "No word from God will ever fail."

Now, if you were in her shoes, how would you react?

Think about it—she was just told she was going to get pregnant, and she wasn't married. And it could mean that she wasn't going to get married because how could she know if Joseph would believe her that the baby wasn't someone else's but the Holy Spirit's? What would her family and friends think? Would she be punished?

Read Luke 1:38:

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her. – Luke 1:38

Wow. Her response is amazing. As much as I'd like to say I'd react the same way, I don't know if I would or not. How was she able to completely trust in the plan she was just told?

The first words she says answer that completely.

I am the Lord's servant.

She put that before anything else. Before her plans to get married, before what her fiancé or her family may think of her. Before her own safety. She trusted God because she was His servant—she lived to serve Him, because she knew His plan was greater than her own.

And obviously, it was.

God used Mary to bring the savior of the world to this earth. She played a part in the greatest story of all time. What a privilege! And all because she had purposed in her heart to be the Lord's servant.

I'm going to tell you three reasons Mary had the right idea.

God has a plan for you.

God will protect you.

God loves you more than anyone else ever will.

Read Jeremiah 29:11:

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." —Jeremiah 29:11

How can you not trust in that? Not only does God have plans for you, but we learn right here that He has plans to prosper you, that He will not harm you, and that His plans include a hope and a future for you.

Now, I don't know about you, but those sound better than any plans I could make up for myself.

Read Psalms 121:5-7:

The Lord watches over you—the Lord is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all harm— He will watch over your life. - Psalms 121:5-7

Wow. So not only does God have a plan for you, but He also watches over and protects you. What an amazing thing!

While it may still be scary to trust an unknown plan of God's, we can rest assured that no matter what that plan is, it includes Him protecting us and watching over us.

Mary knew that. She knew that God had a plan and that He wouldn't harm her. That's why she had chosen to live her life as the Lord's servant, because she knew He was worth trusting.

Read John 3:16:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. – John 3:16

It's kind of cool, because this verse was possible because Mary trusted God, but it's just another reason for *us* to trust Him.

He loves us. There is no possible doubt about that. And if you do ever doubt that, just think about this verse. He loved us so much that He sent His one and only son to die on our behalf so we would have the option of spending forever with Him.

That's a crazy kind of love.

Mary made the best choice ever when she chose to trust God's plan. But here's the thing: For her, it wasn't even a choice.

Why? Because she had decided, long before that, that she would live her life as a servant of the Lord. That she would obey His word and trust in Him, doing whatever He asked her to do.

So when the angel showed up with this crazy plan, she didn't even have to think about it. She had decided she was going to be the Lord's servant, so the answer was automatically yes.

It was a yes that changed the course of history, and it wasn't even a yes she had to think about.

And what a beautiful yes that was.

Small Group Questions:

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2. How would you have been feeling if you were in her shoes?
3. Do you think she made the right decision?
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Teach – Wrap-Up

I think that sometimes one of the things that holds us back from fully trusting God is our own happiness. We're so worried that if we live as a servant of God, like Mary chose to, then He'll ask us to do things that will make us unhappy. We're afraid that His plan isn't as good as ours, and that if you follow His plan, you'll never get to follow your own dreams.

That's just crazy. I could give you a list of reasons why that's crazy—and with this message, I kind of already have—but I think I'll let Mary speak for herself on this one.

Pass out sheets of paper with the scriptures on them.

Let's all read this together:

And Mary said:

*“My soul glorifies the Lord
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for He has been mindful of the humble state of His servant. From now on all generations
will call me blessed,
for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is His name.
His mercy extends to those who fear Him, from generation to generation.
He has performed mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who are proud in
their inmost thoughts.
He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.
He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.
-Luke 1:46-53*

Does that sound like someone who is miserable? Does it sound like someone who wishes they would have followed their own plan?

No, it doesn't. It sounds like someone who is in awe that God chose her!

I'm telling you guys, if you decide to follow God wholeheartedly and to live life as His servant, you will be amazed at what God will choose you for.

His plans are so much better than our plans; I can't even put it into words.

Take this verse home and put it somewhere you'll see it a lot this week. Think about living your life as God's servant, and when you start to doubt that, read this verse. Doesn't it sound like something you would want to say about your own life?

God has already chosen you. He's just waiting on you to say yes.